

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTTE-00 FMC-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09

OES-07 L-03 /047 W

-----090744 060559Z /12

R 050930Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6912

UNCLAS MONROVIA 7623

AF/W PLEASE PASS AMB. CARTER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EEWT, LI

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT TOLBERT DEFENDS LIBERIA'S MERCHANT MARINE POLICY

1. AT A DINNER GIVEN IN HIS HONOR (NOV. 1) ON THE OCCASION OF A VISIT TO LIBERIA OF EXECUTIVES OF THE LIBERIAN SHIPPING COUNCIL, LTD. AND THE FEDERAL OF AMERICAN CONTROLLED SHIPPING, PRESIDENT TOLBERT DELCARED THAT IN LINE WITH ITS BASIC PHILOSOPHY OF FREE TRADE LIBERIA HAS CONSISTENTLY STOOD AGAINST CARGO PREFERENCE AND HONORED ITS AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES. REFERRING TO PROTECTIONIST GROUPS CHALLENGING LIBERIA'S DETERMINATION TO HONOR ITS COMMITMENTS AND DEFEND ITS PHILOSOPHY, THE PRESIDENT CATEGORICALLY STATED THAT LIBERIA HAS SUPPORTED AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE POLICY OF THE U.S. DEPT OF DEFENSE TO CONTROL AMERICAN-OWNED SHIPPING. HE EMPHASIZED LIBERIA'S WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IN ANY WAY, "BE IT BY EXECUTIVE AGREEMENT, TREATY OR OTHERWISE, TO REINFORCE LIBERIA'S COMMITMENT TO MAKING AVAILABLE AMERICAN-OWNED SHIPS UNDER THE LIBERIAN FLAG TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IN A NATIONAL EMERGENCY".

THE PRESIDENT POINTED OUT THAT CARGO PREFERENCE LEGISLATION RECENTLY ADVOCATED BY CERTAIN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS IS CONTRARY TO THE TERMS OF LIBERIA'S TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP, COMMERCE AND UNCLASSIFIED

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NAVIGATION WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE EXPRESSED GRATIFICATION THAT THE "UNFAIR TACTICS" OF THESE INTERESTS DID NOT PREVAIL AND THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION FAILED TO PASS.

PRESIDENT TOLBERT TOOK PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT LIBERIA'S MARITIME PRACTICE AND SAFETY STANDARDS REQUIRED BY LIBERIAN MARITIME LAW ARE NOT ONLY IN EXCESS OF ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS BUT

ALSO RANK AMONG THE VERY HIGHEST. HE REFERRED TO LIBERIA'S ROLE IN FORMULATING AND IN OBTAINING THE ADOPTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON MINIMUM STANDARDS IN MERCHANT SHIPS AT A RECENT MARITIME CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION. PRESIDENT TOLBERT ASSURED THE AUDIENCE THAT LIBERIA WILL CONTINUE ITS OPEN DOOR ECONOMIC POLICY ESPECIALLY AS IT APPLIES TO INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT SHIPPING AND CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE MOST EFFICIENT AND PROFESSIONAL MARITIME ADMINISTRATION OF ITS MERCHANT FLEET. LIBERIA WILL ALSO SUPPORT, ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT, THE HIGHEST MERCHANT MARINE SAFETY STANDARDS ACCEPTABLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME COMMUNITY. THE PRESIDENT WARNED THAT LIBERIA WILL DEFEND ITS MARITIME INTEREST AGAINST UNLAWFUL AND DISCRIMINATORY ATTACKS ON ITS MERCHANT SHIPPING PROGRAM WITH EVERY LEGITIMATE AND APPROPRIATE MEANS AT ITS DISPOSAL. HE CALLED ON HIS FRIENDS TO "BECOME TOTALLY INVOLVED" IN TRANSFORMING LIBERIA'S IMAGE FROM A SO-CALLED "FLAG OF CONVENIENCE" TO A FLAG OF "GENUINE FRIENDSHIP, COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT AMONG ALL NATIONS."

2. COMPLETE TEXT OF SPEECH IS BEING TRANSMITTED BY AIRGRAM.  
HORAN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009